



# Kit Bond

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Sixth Generation Missourian

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## VETERANS NEWS

### Bond Announces Victory for Veterans

Senator Kit Bond recently announced a big victory for veterans – an additional \$1.3 billion in emergency funding for veterans medical care has been added to the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill. Senator Bond's amendment, which he sponsored with Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), won Senate approval on October 17<sup>th</sup>.

"This is a victory for the countless veterans who have sacrificed so much for our country," said Bond. "We must ensure that our service-members from basic training to deployment to discharge receive the care they need. This \$1.3 billion increase is a good start."

As the chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee that funds the Department of Veterans Affairs, Senator Bond's number one priority is veterans' health care. Senator Bond has worked tirelessly to improve compensation and claims processing while finding solutions to improve training and accountability within the VA system. Earlier this month, Bond was able to win Senate approval to extend medical coverage to Reservists and members of the National Guard currently without coverage.

Bond explained to his colleagues that the VA system cannot currently keep up with the demand of the current veteran population. This is illustrated by the tens of thousands of veterans who have been told to wait at least six months to get an appointment, or in many cases, up to two years.

Current problems will only grow worse as the thousands of wounded service-members returning from Afghanistan and Iraq are discharged from the military and begin to depend on the VA.

### Bond Pledges to Continue the Fight for Veterans

Senator Kit Bond updated veterans on his efforts to improve the overall quality of life and benefits package for our Nation's neediest veterans during remarks at the VFW State Convention in Columbia. "We must never forget the men and women who dedicated their lives to defending our freedom," said Bond. "It is important to me to maintain a dialogue and do everything I can to improve the quality of life for those who have sacrificed so much for this country."

In addition to fighting for increased funding for the VA, Bond outlined other legislative means he is pursuing to better veterans' lives. Bond, an original co-sponsor of the Veterans Prescription Drugs Assistance Act, hopes this legislation will address the problems veterans have in receiving prescription drugs or seeing a VA doctor. Despite record funding increases over the past few years, veterans must still wait for several months to see a VA doctor. Also at issue is the requirement that veterans see a VA doctor



*Bond talks with veterans at the VFW Convention.*

before receiving medication even though a privately licensed physician has already written a prescription. This policy has not only contributed to the long waiting lines, but it has denied care to service-connected and lower income veterans.

As Chairman of the Senate VA-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee Bond assured veterans that his top priority is ensuring that the VA has adequate funding to provide accessible and quality care for our Nation's veterans. "It is a moral imperative that we correct this problem," said Bond, "and I believe that this legislation is a step in the right direction."

Bond also was presented with the VFW Congressional award – the organization's highest congressional honor – during the convention.

### Bond Honors Veterans, Military Personnel and Families at Memorial Day Ceremony

Sen. Kit Bond honored those who served in the armed services and thanked the men and women in the military currently serving during his Memorial Day keynote address in Kansas City.

"We are gathered here today to honor and pay tribute to the valor, heroism and achievements of America's fallen heroes," said Bond. "In doing so each Memorial Day, we consecrate and preserve as a free nation their sense of duty, sacrifice and patriotism for generations to come."

The Memorial Day ceremony took place at Kansas City's Liberty Memorial, for which Bond previously secured renovation funds as a senior member of the Senate Appropriations Committee. The Liberty Memorial was built as a national tribute to the men and women who served and gave their lives in

World War I.

Bond also honored the families of servicemen, particularly those that lost loved ones to war, "The families serve alongside their loved ones, enduring long separations, spending hours, days, and months praying for their safe return and holding down the home-front. I wish to recognize these patriotic men and women and offer my prayers to the family members of the departed."

As Chairman of the VA-HUD Senate Appropriations Subcommittee and honorary member of the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) Board of Directors, the nation's leading organization dedicated to assisting families who have lost a loved one in the armed forces, Bond continues to be a champion for military and veterans' issues.

### **Bond and VA Secretary Principi Revisit KC Veterans Hospital**

Senator Kit Bond, joined by Anthony J. Principi, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), revisited the Kansas City Veterans Hospital just one year after he spurred an investigation of the hospital following reports of unsanitary conditions.

"On behalf of the veterans that use the hospital, I thank you, Secretary Principi, for

your action and responsiveness," said Bond. "I know that your leadership and commitment to veterans at the Department is making a real and long-lasting difference to the welfare and well-being of veterans everywhere, not just here in Missouri. Your efforts are starting to transform the effectiveness of the VA's ability to meet the medical care needs of our veterans."

Last year, after reports surfaced that two comatose patients at the facility were infected with maggots because of an out-of-control rodent and fly infestation, Bond, then ranking member of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee that funds the Department of Veterans Affairs, demanded an immediate investigation of the hospital. Bond's call for action resulted in a \$10 million upgrade and modernization of the hospital, along with a review of hospital management.

As Chairman of the Senate VA-HUD and Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, Bond stressed his commitment to veterans' health care, "I will continue my work to ensure that the Federal government keeps the promises made to our Nation's veterans that they receive the support and services to live productive and healthy lives," said Bond. "Funding for the VA has always been and will continue to be my highest priority for the subcommittee."



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*Bond is presented with the VFW Congressional award.*